The True Protestant and Church of England CLERGY

Vindicated from the Imputation of

Preaching up Themselves.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Tunbridge-Wells in *KENT*,

On *Sunday* August 14th, 1715:

And Publish'd

At the general Request of the Hearers.

By *ELIAS STDALL*, D.D.

Prebendary of CANTERBURY, and one of the Proctors for the Clergy of that *Diocese*.

LONDON,

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1715.

The True Protestant and Church
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SERMON

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Tunbridge-Wells in SUSSEX,

On Sunday August 15th, 1715:

And Ordered

At the general Request of the Hearers.

By ELIAS STYLE, D.D.
Prebendary of CANTERBURY, and one of
the Prolocutors for the Clergy of that Diocese.

LONDON,
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II. CORINTH. iv. 5.

For we preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and our ſelves your ſervants for Jeſus ſake.

AFTER St. *Paul* had left *Corinth*, where he had ſpent two Years, and had planted a conſiderable Church, they were over-run with great Diſorders, and were broken into Factions and Parties, under ſome New Teachers and Leaders, who made it their buſineſs to diminiſh his Authority, and to diſparage him and leſſen him all they cou'd, in the eſteem of the *Corinthians*. Accordingly, the Buſineſs and Deſign of the Two *Epiſtles* which he wrote to them, is to remedy and rectifie thoſe Diſorders, and to ſupport his own Credit and Authority, and vindicate his Conduct againſt thoſe Falſe Teachers. This is evident to every careful and judicious Reader of theſe *Epiſtles*.

The Words, which I have choſen for my Text, are part of that Vindication of himſelf;

wherein he aſſerts his Sincerity and Faithfulneſs in Preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, and that he did not ſeek his own Glory or Intereſt, or any Secular Advantage in it; that he did not ſet up himſelf for a Lord or Head, (in which he ſeems to reflect on the Falſe Teachers) but that he preach'd *Jeſus Chriſt* the Common *Lord* and Head of all Chriſtians; pretending himſelf to be, like the other Apoſtles, no more than a *Miniſter* under Chriſt, ready to do any kind of Services for the Edification of Men in Chriſt's Religion. This, without criticiſing particularly on the Words, ſeems to be the general Import and Drift of them.

Now tho' none but downright Infidels can ſuppoſe, that the Apoſtles and their firſt Succeſſors in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel did *preach themſelves*, in any ſenſe; yet there are too many now-a-days that wou'd take it very ill to be thought *Infidels*, who ſeem to think that the preſent Miniſters of the Goſpel cannot pretend to *approve themſelves to be clear in this Matter*. For, what thro' the Ignorance of Some, and the Malice of Others, nothing is more commonly objected againſt *us* of the Clergy, than that we *preach our Selves*.

My Buſineſs therefore at this time ſhall be, to endeavour to Vindicate the preſent Miniſters of the Goſpel from this odious and unjuſt Imputation. But here I muſt beg leave to premiſe, that I am not about to undertake a Defence of any Miniſters, but thoſe of the

Proteſtant Profeſſion, and eſpecially thoſe of the *Church of England*. As for the Clergy of the *Church of Rome*, I fear, or rather I am fully perſwaded, that they will be found *too guilty* in this Matter. And 'tis *chiefly* from the Conduct of the *Popiſh* Church and Clergy, that Evil-minded Men and Unbelievers have taken occaſion, tho' unjuſtly, to think and ſpeak ſuch *perverſe things* as they do, of the Chriſtian Miniſtry in General. 'Tis a kind of Maxim with ſuch Men, that *the Prieſts of all Religions are the ſame*, that is, ſuch as the Prieſts of the *Church of Rome* are. This they hope will be taken for granted; otherwiſe their ſharpeſt Reflections have no Sting; their ſtrongeſt Reaſons, no Force at all.

But here we muſt demand their Pardon, if we deny this Maxim, and make a Diſtinction (where there is ſo great and manifeſt a Difference) betwixt the Miniſters of the *Proteſtant*, and thoſe of the *Popiſh* Profeſſion.

They are the former of theſe, and eſpecially thoſe of this *Church of England*, whom we are about to Vindicate from the Imputation of *preaching themſelves*, that is, ſeeking their own Glory, Intereſt, and Advantage, or claiming to themſelves any undue Powers, Privileges, Pre-eminence or Authority. For it cannot be ſaid, with any colour at all, that we *preach our ſelves*, unleſs it be upon theſe or the like Accounts.

I ſhall therefore endeavour to ſhew, That we the *Clergy* of the *Proteſtant* Profeſſion, and more-

more-especially we of the *Church of England*, are not chargeable with any of those *Claims*, *Practices*, or *Doctrines*, which might give just Occasion for Men to Think or Say that we thus *preach our selves*. And in order hereto, it shall be particularly shewn,

I. That we do not claim to our selves any *Temporal* or Coercive *Power* or Jurisdiction.

II. That we do not pretend our selves to be *exempt* from the Temporal or Civil Power, or that either our Persons or Actions, as Clergy-men, are not subject to the Inspection and Cognizance, to the Direction and Government of the Civil Magistrate.

III. That we do not preach up such *Doctrines* as have been invented meerly to bring *Gain*, or *Power*, or *Honour* to our selves.

IV. That we do not affect a *Dominion* over Mens *Minds* or *Consciences*, any more than over their *Bodies* or *Estates*, nor require an *Implicit Faith* or *Blind Obedience* from them.

If indeed we were chargeable on any of these Accounts, we might with some Reason be said to *preach our selves*. But we hope easily to *approve our selves to be clear in these Matters*.

I. Then: We do not claim to our selves any *Temporal* or Coercive *Power* or Jurisdiction. As our Blessed Saviour, from whom we

we originally derive our Commission, declared that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, and plainly precluded his Apostles, and consequently their Successors in the Government of the Church, from any such Dominion as the *Kings of the Gentiles exercised* over their Subjects; so we his Ministers of the *Protestant Profession*, and of the *Church of England*, in Conformity to his Will, do not claim any such Pre-eminence or Power over the People committed to our Charge, as is proper to the Kingdoms of this World, that is, any *Temporal* or Coercive Power at all.

John xviii. 36.

Matth. xx. 25, 26.

Indeed, the *Pope*, and his *Clergy*, under a pretence of His being *Christ's Vicar-General* upon Earth, and the *Visible Head* of the Catholic Church, have erected a Monarchy, which they call *Spiritual* or *Ecclesiastical*. But as it was raised by worldly Artifices and Intrigues, and is manag'd with all the Pomp and Grandeur of a Temporal or Secular Kingdom, so they have thought fit at last, either directly and in Terms, or indirectly and by Consequence, to claim a *Temporal* Power to support it.

Some of them do *directly* assert his Holiness to have a Supreme, Universal, Temporal Power, by Divine Right, over all the World. Others, not willing to say so much, do in effect grant as much, under the Terms of *more directly*, and *in order to Spirituals*, and attribute

bute to the Pope this Ample and Extenſive Power, that *in order to Spiritual Good*, he hath *the Supreme Authority of diſpoſing of the Temporal Things of all Chriſtians.* And it is a ſharp, but true Reflection, which is made upon the *Romiſh Clergy*, in the *Helvetic* Confeſſion, that *ex clavibus cudunt enſes, lanceas, ſceptra, & coronas, plenamque in maxima regna, demique in animas & corpora poteſtatem*; i. e. "Out of the "Keys [of the Kingdom of Heaven, deli-"ver'd to Chriſt and his Apoſtles] they "have forged Swords and Spears, Sceptres "and Crowns, and an intire Power over the "greateſt Kingdoms, in ſhort, over the Souls "and Bodies of Men." And by this pretended Power, as far-fetch'd as it ſeems to be, and as ill-grounded *in Right*, they have ſometimes *in Fact*, even *exalted themſelves above all that is called God*, i. e. above all Civil Power, above Kings and Emperors, whom (when they could) they have deſpiſed and trampled upon, depoſed and ſentenced them to Deſtruction; and abſolving their Subjects from the Allegiance due to them, have pretended to diſpoſe of their Kingdoms to others: Not to inſiſt upon leſſer Exerciſes of this uſurped Power in Temporals, ſuch as impoſing Laws and Tributes upon the Subjects of other Princes, and exempting great Numbers of Perſons and Cauſes from the Cognizance of the Civil Power.

Cap. 14.

2 Theſſ. ii. 4.

Now,

Now, it is very well known that as the *Proteſtant* Churches acknowledge no ſuch *Viſible Head* of the Catholick Church, ſo they lay no Claim, *directly* or *indirectly* (as far as I know) to any *Temporal Power*. Sure I am, we the Clergy of the *Church* of *England* do not.

We pretend to bear no *Sword*, but that *of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, whereby we can *teach, exhort, admoniſh, and rebuke, with all the Authority* of *Miniſters* and *Ambaſſadors* of *Chriſt*. But we do not pretend to be *Lords over God's Heritage*, or to have any external Power to compel and force Men to Obedience. Our proper Power is Internal and *Spiritual*, that is, it has to do only with the *Minds* and *Conſciences* of Men; (and that, not by way of abſolute Dominion and Sovereignty neither, as we ſhall ſee afterwards:) But it is not concern'd with the *Bodies* and *Eſtates* of Men, as that we call the *Temporal, Secular*, or *Civil* Power, is.

Eph. vi. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 11. Tit. ii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 3.

Whatever External Coercive Power or Juriſdiction our Eccleſiaſtical Superiors in ſome Caſes have; it is not claim'd by virtue of our Office, as originally inherent therein, but 'tis freely acknowledg'd to be owing to the Favour of Princes, and the Proviſion of Laws piouſly granted to us, to give us a greater Authority with thoſe who have not a juſt Notion of, or due Regard to, purely

Spiritual and *Eccleſiaſtical* Cenſures. And ſince the Wiſdom of the Government thinks fit to continue this to us, we hope we ſhall not be charged with *Selfiſhneſs* on this Account, any more than other Societies or Bodies of Men, for retaining their Legal Privileges.

As for the Power of *Excommunication*, or excluding Men from the Communion of the Church, (which is the proper Spiritual or Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure) and conſequently of reſtoring them to it again; we think it has a Foundation both in Reaſon and Scripture. And ſince we do not pretend, that God is *abſolutely* obliged to ratify our Sentence, and to *bind in Heaven* what we *bind on Earth*, or *looſe* what *we looſe*, right or wrong; I preſume we are not juſtly chargeable with *Preaching our ſelves*, for claiming *this* Power, which we think God has given us for *Edification*, (and ſo, indeed, it would certainly be, if rightly exerciſed, and religiouſly regarded) and *not for Deſtruction*. This is in it ſelf purely a *Spiritual* Cenſure; and as for the *Temporal Diſabilities* conſequent thereupon, they are wholly owing to the Civil Power, which has thought them a proper Enforcement of that which is Spiritual. Thus much may ſuffice to ſhew, that we do not claim to our ſelves any *Temporal* or Coercive Power or Juriſdiction, and ſo cannot be ſaid to *preach our ſelves* on that Account.

2 Cor. x. 8. & xiii. 10.

II. Neither

II. Neither do we pretend to be *exempt* from the Temporal or Civil Power, or that either our Perſons or Actions are not ſubject to the Inſpection and Cognizance, to the Direction and Government, of the Secular Magiſtrate.

The Writers of the *Romiſh* Church do indeed generally aſſert, That the State of the Church, and all Eccleſiaſtical Affairs are exempt from the Civil Power, and not under the Inſpection and Government thereof; and that the Clergy, as ſuch, are not Subjects to the Secular Governor, and that they are not accountable before him, no, not even in *Civil* or *Criminal* Cauſes. And ſome, it ſeems, carry the Point ſo high, as to maintain, that no Civil or Secular Laws do lay any Obligation directly upon the Clergy, as having no Authority over them.

Now, if we did teach any ſuch Doctrine as this, I think we ſhould give too juſt Occaſion for ſuch an Imputation, as that of *Preaching our ſelves*. But whatever others may be, I may venture to affirm, that the Clergy of the Church of *England* are not culpable in this reſpect. As we *render unto God the things that are Gods*; ſo we *render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*. Matth. xxii. 21.

We believe, and do freely acknowledge, that it was no part of our Bleſſed Saviour's Deſign, in ſetting up his Religion, or in the conſtituting of his Church, to deſtroy or

diminiſh the Rights of Secular Powers. We think that their Authority is thereby rather *in ſome ſenſe* extended and enlarged, and their Dignity encreaſed and advanced. For their Authority over all Subjects whatſoever, doth, according to our Doctrine, not only ſtill remain *intire* to them, but they alſo receive a kind of *Acceſſion* thereto, from the Conſtitution of Chriſtianity; the Object of their Government being ſo far *enlarg'd* thereby, that they have a Right of Inſpection and Care over *new* Matters which have been eſtabliſhed by the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. And it ſeems ſo much the more to *exalt* and *advance* their Dignity, that not only all Subjects in their general Capacity, as ſuch, are obliged to ſubmit themſelves to their Kings and Princes; but that even thoſe Paſtors and Governors of the Church in their Realms, whoſe Office was inſtituted by Divine Appointment, are included in this Duty, and are not the leſs Subjects to the Prince or the State, notwithſtanding their relation to Chriſt and his Church. For we underſtand the Precept of the Apoſtle in its full extent,

Rom. xiii. 1. that *every Soul* (whether *Apoſtle*, *Prophet*, *Evangeliſt*, or whatſoever he be, as St. *Chryſoſtom*, with other Fathers, interpret it) ought to *be ſubject to the Higher*, that is, to the *Civil Powers*: For, notwithſtanding the fooliſh Evaſions of ſome *Popiſh* Writers, the Apoſtle, in that Place, is evidently diſcourſing of Obedience to *them*, and them

only. In ſhort, All the World knows that the Clergy of the *Church of England* do acknowledge the *King's Majeſty to be Supreme Governor in theſe his Realms and Dominions, over all Perſons, in all Cauſes, as well Eccleſiaſtical as Temporal:* And that *He hath the ſame Authority in Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical, that the Godly Kings had amongſt the Jews, and Chriſtian Emperors in the Primitive Church:* That *He is to rule all Eſtates and Degrees, whether they be Eccleſiaſtical or Temporal, and reſtrain with the Civil Sword the Stubborn and Evil-doers.* Can. 55. 1603. Can. 2. Article 37.

But it will be ſaid, that we preach up the *Independence of the Church upon the State.* I ſhall not enter upon a nice and particular Diſcuſſion of this Point: It may ſuffice to my preſent Purpoſe, to ſay, That if by the *Independence of the Church upon the State,* be meant only, that the Chriſtian Church is not a Creature of the State, and that the Sacred Miniſtry does not derive its Original or Being from the Secular Power, as all Civil Officers do; but that the Church and the Miniſtry being founded and inſtituted by the Authority of Chriſt, no Secular Powers whatſoever have a Right to defeat, aboliſh, or invade any part of the Powers which Chriſt has committed to the Officers of his Church; ſuch as Preaching the Word, Adminiſtring the Sacraments, *&c.* If, I ſay, by *the Independence of the Church on the State,* no more be

be meant but this; we do assert and maintain it: And none can deny it, but (if they be consistent with themselves) they must deny the Institution of any Visible Christian Church, and are in a fair way of denying Christianity it self. And I believe it will be found too true in *Fact*, that they who have denied this *Independence*, have been such Persons, as might justly, and without breach of Charity, be suspected of Infidelity.

But if by the *Independence of the Church on the State*, be meant, that the Supreme Civil Magistrate has no Right at all *in Sacris*, no Authority to make Laws relating to Religion, or Ecclesiastical Affairs, (in Things and Circumstances not particularly determined or presrib'd in Scripture) no Power to regulate the Clergy in the Exercise of their respective Functions, and to see that they do their Duty, and to restrain and punish them when they do not; In short, that the Clergy are not as much *Subjects* to the Supreme Civil Power, as any other Estate of Men: I say, such an *Independence of the Church upon the State* as this, is what the *Church of England* utterly disowns.

I will not undertake to answer for all that call themselves *Protestants*, as to this Particular; but the Declarations of *our Church*, in this Point, are so full and plain, that it cannot, without the greatest Ignorance or Malice, be said that we pretend to be *exempt* from the Civil Power, or that we *preach our selves*, on that Account. If

If indeed any among us do carry the Point of the *Independence of the Church on the State*, farther than is consistent with the Declarations of our Church, they are so far not *of us*, and we are not concern'd in *their* Vindication: And *whosoever shall Impeach any Part of the King's Regal Supremacy in Causes Ecclesiastical*, as stated by our Church, he stands, *ipso facto*, Excommunicated by the Canons thereof. But I proceed,

Can. 2. 1603.

III. We do not preach up any such Doctrines and Practices as have been invented merely to bring Gain, or Power, or Honour to our selves. There is a multitude of Doctrines of this kind taught and establish'd in the Church of *Rome*; and indeed, all those peculiar Doctrines and Practices by which they are distinguished from other Churches, have plainly a mixture of Self-Interest in them, and do tend, more or less, to raise the Dignity, Power, and Revenues of the Clergy. I can only glance upon a few of the most obvious Instances of this; and I shall do it, for the most part, in the Words of an Eminent Writer of our Church:

Dr. *Barrow*, Of the *Pope's Supremacy*.

"What meaneth (*saith he*) the Doctrine "concerning that Middle Region of Souls, "or Cloister of *Purgatory*, whereof the Pope "holdeth the Keys, but that he must be "Master of Peoples Condition, and of their "Purse?

"What

" What meaneth the Treaſure of *Merits* " and *Works of Supererogation*, but a way of " driving a Trade, and drawing Money from " ſimple People?

" Why is the *Opus Operatum* in Sacraments " taught to confer Grace, but to breed a " high Opinion of the Prieſt?

" Whence did the monſtrous Doctrine of " *Tranſubſtantiation* iſſue, but from a deſign " to magnify the Credit of thoſe, who by " ſaying a few Words, can *make* our God and " Saviour? and withal, to exerciſe a nota- " ble Inſtance of their Power over Men, in " making them to renounce their Reaſon and " Senſes?

" Whither tendeth the Doctrine concern- " ing the *Maſs* being a *Propitiatory Sacrifice* " *for the Dead*, but to engage Men to leave " good Sums in their Wills, for Maſſes to be " offer'd in their behalf?

" Why is the *Cup* with-holden from the " *Laity*, but to humble them by ſo notable " a Diſtinction from the Prieſt-hood, in the " principal Myſtery of our Religion?

" At what doth the Doctrine concerning " the *Neceſſity* of *Auricular Confeſſion* aim, " but that thereby the Prieſts may have a " mighty Awe upon the Conſciences of People, " may dive into their Secrets, and manage " their Lives as they pleaſe?

" And what doth a like *neceſſary*, *particu-* " *lar Abſolution* intend, but to ſet the Prieſt " in a lofty State of Authority above the " Penitent,

" Penitent, as a Judge between God and " him, and a Diſpenſer of his Salvation?

" Why do they equal Eccleſiaſtical *Tradi-* " *tions* with Scripture, but that, on pretence " of them, they may obtrude any Doctrines, " advantageous to their Deſigns?

" What doth the *Prohibition of Holy Scrip-* " *ture drive* at, but detaining the People in " Ignorance, that they may be forced blindly " to ſubmit to *their* Dictates?

" Why muſt Prayers and Sacraments be " celebrated in an *unknown Tongue*, but that " the Prieſts may ſeem to be all in all, and " the People to have no ſhare in procuring " the Benefits and Effects of them?

" Why are the Veneration of *Images* and " *Reliques*, the belief of *Miracles* and *Le-* " *gends*, the Undertaking of *Pilgrimages*, and " ſuch Fopperies, cheriſhed, but to keep the " People in a ſlaviſh Credulity and Dotage, " and in the mean time to pick various Gains " from them by ſuch Trade?

I paſs by a great many other Inſtances which he gives. Theſe are ſufficient to give a Taſte of the Tendency of their peculiar Doctrines and Practices, and ſhew what their Views probably are in ſo ſtiffly maintaining them.

Now, if we of the Proteſtant Profeſſion did Preach up any ſuch *Doctrines* and *Practices*, as theſe which have no Warrant from Holy Writ, but are either groſs Corruptions of, or Additions to the Chriſtian Doctrines and Inſtitutions, and are ſo evidently contri-

ved and ſuited to ſerve Worldly Ends; I confeſs we ſhould have a hard Task of it to clear our ſelves from the Imputation of *Preaching our ſelves*, or ſeeking our own Glory, Intereſt, and Advantage.

But here we think *we have whereof we may rather* Glory, and may Triumph over all ſuch Reproaches, becauſe it is known to all the World, and it need not be particularly proved, that we have baniſhed and driven away theſe, and all ſuch Errors and Corruptions; that we do not *teach for Doctrines* theſe and ſuch like Inventions and *Commandments of Men*, but do expreſly condemn them all: We bring all our Doctrines to the true Original Standard, which is the *Word of God*, and we profeſs to *teach nothing* (*as required of neceſſity to eternal Salvation*) *but what we are perſwaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture.*

Vid. 39 Articles of Religion.

vid. Forms of Ordination.

This we the Miniſters of the *Church* of *England* do ſolemnly promiſe, at our Ordination, and I truſt we ſhall generally be found faithful in the Performance. But if *of our own ſelves*, particular *Men* ſhall ſometimes *ariſe ſpeaking perverſe things*, and endeavouring to reſtore and revive any of thoſe falſe Doctrines and corrupt Practices, which we have juſtly rejected and renounced; we hope the whole Body of us ſhall not ſuffer, or lie under any Imputation on *their* Account, when

for ought we know, are preparing to *go out from us, that it may be made manifeſt that they* really *are not of us.* But, 1 Joh. ii. 19.

IV. I come to ſhew, in the laſt Place, That we do not affect a *Dominion* over Mens *Minds or Conſciences*, any more than over their Bodies or Eſtates, nor require an *Implicit Faith* or *Blind Obedience* from them.

As it is well known that all that Dominion and Sovereignty which the Church of *Rome* affects to exerciſe over the Minds and Conſciences of Men, by teaching them to reſolve their Faith into the Authority of the Church, by impoſing what Doctrines and Practices they pleaſe upon them, and requiring Implicit Faith and Blind Obedience from them, and conſequently denying them the Right, and debarring them from the Means of Examination, forbidding them the Uſe even of Holy Scripture: I ſay, as all this uſurped Dominion is built upon their Pretence of *Infallibility*, (which they will have to be amongſt them, tho' they cannot agree where to lodge it) ſo it is as plain, that the *Proteſtant* Churches, not pretending to *Infallibility*, neither *do* nor *can* affect, or claim any ſuch *Dominion*. We acknowledge no *proper Dominion* or Authority, but only in God and his Chriſt, over the *Conſciences* of Men. We do not pretend to make Articles of Faith, or inſtitute Sacraments, or

to determine what is neceſſary for Men to believe and to do, in order to Salvation, by our own Authority, but only to teach Men what we think *God* requires them to believe and do. As we own the *Word of God* to be the only *Rule of Faith*, and to be ſufficiently *plain* in all *neceſſary* Things, ſo we teach Men to reſolve their *Faith* into That. We are ſo far from *taking away* this *Key of Knowledge* from Men, that we not only freely allow, but do earneſtly exhort and charge Men to read and ſtudy the Bible, and *ſearch the Scriptures, whether Things* be ſo as we ſay, or no. Nor do we pretend abſolutely to determin the Senſe of Scripture, and underſtand it for Men; for then it were no matter whether we let them have the Uſe of it or not. But (as an Order of Men ſet up by Divine Inſtitution, and call'd by proper Authority, and ſuppoſed, by our Education, and Studies, and Prayers, and the Bleſſing of God upon them, to be duly qualified and enabled for ſuch a Work) we teach and help Men to underſtand the Scripture themſelves. We take away no Man's Right of *Private Judgment*, or of uſing his own Underſtanding as well as he can; nor do we require Men blindly to *ſubmit* their Judgments and Conſciences *to us*, but to *inform* their *Judgments* and *Conſciences by* us. We do not ſet up for our ſelves for *Dictators* and *Maſters*, as having *Dominion over* Mens *Faith*; but we pretend only to be *Helpers of their Joy*, and *Miniſters*,

Mat. xxiii. 10.
2 Cor. i. 24.

Miniſters, by whom they are *taught*, not *enjoyned*, what to believe. Nor do we take upon our ſelves a *Power* of *making* Religion, but only a *charge* of *ſhewing* it, and perſwading Men to believe it, and live agreeably to it, that they may be ſaved.

We attribute no *Authority* to the *Church*, but what is conſiſtent with its acknowledg'd *Fallibility*, an Authority of providing for Order, and Peace, and Union, not of impoſing upon the Judgments and Conſciences of Men; an Authority that challenges great Regard and Veneration, not an abſolute and implicit Submiſſion, which can be due only to *Infallibility*. We do not arrogate to our ſelves, or attribute to any Man, or Number of Men whatſoever, that which is peculiar to God and Chriſt, I mean to be *Abſolute* over Mens Faith and Manners. We know of no ſuch Lord, no ſuch *Maſter* on *Earth*: *One is our* Lord *and Maſter, even Chriſt*, who is in Heaven; He is our only Abſolute, Supreme Lord and Law-giver, and to Him (and Him only) do we teach Men *abſolutely* to ſubmit their Judgments and Conſciences. And thus may we truly apply the Text to our ſelves, in that which ſeems to be the more immediate Senſe of it, *We preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; that is, not our ſelves as Lords, but *Chriſt Jeſus* as the only Lord.

Articles of Religion, xix, xx, xxi.

Matth. xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

This

This I take to be the Sense of the *Church of England*, and of all sincere and judicious *Protestants*. If there be any that call themselves *Protestants*, who affect a *Dominion* over the *Minds* and *Consciences* of Men, who expect they should yield an *implicit Faith* and *absolute Obedience* to their Determinations and Decrees, who would debar Men of the Use of their own Understandings, and of the Right and Means of Examining and judging for themselves, who will not allow Men to Think honestly, that do not Think just as they themselves do, and wou'd be persecuting Men for Conscience sake; all that I can say of such Persons, is, That they seem *not to know what Spirit they are of*, and are so far *Popish* in the *Protestant* Profession. For the Pretence of *Infallibility* or an *Absolute Authority* in the Church, and the Claim of *Implicit Faith* and *Blind Obedience* from the People, are the very Basis and Ground-work of *Popery*. And upon such Principles there could never have been any *Reformation*.

Thus have I gone through the Particulars I proposed to speak to: And I hope I have sufficiently shewn, that We the *Clergy* of the *Protestant* Profession, and especially of the *Church of England*, are not liable to the Imputation of *preaching Our selves*, or seeking our own Glory, Interest, or Advantage upon any of those Accounts, which seem to be the principal ones whereupon such an Imputation can be grounded.

Some have been so unreasonable, as to object our *Maintenance* to us; as if it must needs be supposed that we are full of Craft and Design, and cannot be Sincere and Honest in the Discharge of our Office, because it is (as they love to speak) our *Trade*, and we live by it. An Objection which might with equal Reason be made against Men of other Professions,

Professions, whether *Physicians* or *Lawyers*, who are generally in the way of getting much more by their Care of the *Bodies and Estates* of Men, than *We* by that of their *Souls*.

But this is such an unfair and unhandsome Reflection, as, I presume, will not find any Entertainment in the Minds of Persons of any Sense or Ingenuity; and therefore I shall not think it necessary to enter upon a Confutation of it.

To all that have any Regard either to right Reason or Divine Revelation, it may suffice to offer the following Passages of Holy Scripture, which seem to carry the greatest *Reason* as well as *Authority* with them. *Who goeth a warfare at any time of his own cost? Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof? Who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things? Do ye not know that they who* (of old under the Jewish Dispensation) *ministred about holy things, lived of the Sacrifice? and they who waited at the Altar, were partakers with the Altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. IX. 7, 11, 13, 14.

I shall add no more upon this Point, but only beg leave to take Occasion from it, to remind You, that *this Place* * being not Endowed, there is no *certain or settled Maintenance* at all for Him who here *ministreth to you in holy things*, nothing but what arises from the voluntary Contributions of the Quality and Gentry that resort hither about this Season; and yet, that He constantly exerciseth his Ministry here, in Praying, Preaching, and Catechising, during the whole Course of the Year: Without which, many Families who have planted themselves here for our Accommodation, being too

* Tunbridge-Wells-Chapel.

remote

remote from the Pariſh-Churches, would want the Benefit of the Publick Worſhip and Ordinances of God, and would be like the *Epheſians*, (as St. *Paul* deſcribes them whilſt they were yet Heathens) *without Chriſt*, *without God in the World*.

Epheſ. ii. 12.

And this Hint, I conceive, may be ſufficient to ſuch an Intelligent Auditory as this.]

Now to come to a Concluſion:

Let me intreat you (and after what has been ſaid, I hope I have ſome Right to intreat you, and even require of you) not to be too ready to give ear to the wicked Suggeſtions and Inſinuations of *Men of corrupt Minds*, who would perſwade you that by all that we *Prieſts* ſay or do, we mean nothing *but our ſelves*; and that under pretence of ſetting forth God's Glory, and ſetting forward your Salvation, we are only promoting our own Intereſt, and ſeeking to get Dominion over you. Whatever any particular Mens private Views and Sentiments may be, of which neither you nor we can pretend to judge; Our Sacred Office and Miniſtry, and the Functions thereof, as underſtood and exerciſed in the *Proteſtant* Churches, and eſpecially in the *Church* of *England*, give no juſt Occaſion for ſuch Suggeſtions. Whatever may be our inward Motives, which are nothing to the Point, you muſt acknowledge, that *Chriſt is* truly *preached to you*; and allow us the Benefit of the Apoſtle's Plea in the Text, That *we preach not our ſelves*, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, *and our ſelves your Servants for Jeſus ſake*:

To whom with the Father, *&c.*

FINIS.

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